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South Plainfield

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Town moves ahead with redevelopment

Mixed uses are foreseen for Hamilton Blvd. Superfund site

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SOUTH PLAINFIELD — Redevelopment plans for the Hamilton Boulevard Industrial Site, a contaminated Superfund site, are continuing to be made.

During a June 20 regular public meeting, the council introduced an ordinance accepting a redevelopment plan for the designated site. The ordinance is expected to be officially adopted after its second reading and final public hearing during the council's July 15 regular public meeting.

The redevelopment plan includes 21 lots, with 21 different owners, covering 29.38 acres.

The majority of the area in need of redevelopment is lot 1, block 256. This 25.4-acre tract contains numerous old buildings, some dating back to the early 1900s. The buildings are currently utilized as rented industrial space for small businesses and to store moving vans.

The property was placed under the federal Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Superfund list in July 1998 after approximately 12 years of soil, surface water and sediment testing.

Since that time, large areas of

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the lot were paved, a truck driving school was closed and the south and east sides of the lot were fenced off. A drainage control system was also installed in 1997 to limit the movement of contaminants to the Bound Brook, Cornell-Dubilier and Dana Electric, two former owners/tenants of the lot involved removed soil from the yards of 13 dwellings in 1999 by agreement with the EPA.

The remaining 20 lots comprise 3.98 acres with six dwellings, one industrial site, six commercial facilities, the borough community police substation and five vacant parcels, (one

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borough-owned and one in semi-public use).

The Planning Board previously noted existing conditions, including environmental problems, diverse ownership, and the condition of structures and varied land use, inhibited development. This being the case, the area met the criteria for designating it as a redevelopment area allowing for a comprehensive redevelopment plan and the improvement of public health, safety and welfare. The area will be developed for mixed use contributing to and serving the community.

The conceptual design plan was prepared by Beacon Planning and Realty Advisors in consultation with the borough council. The plan met several criteria including: being incorporated into the Master Plan, preserving environmentally

sensitive lands, including a pedestrian linkage to the Historic Downtown District, providing municipal parking, providing access to and use of the area while being redeveloped, providing landscaping, providing work and shopping after redevelopment and making sure the redevelopment doesn't overwhelm the infrastructure.

The redeveloped area will include six land use categories including retail/commercial, mini-storage, office/warehouse, public use and intersection and street improvements, semi-public use and a buffer/conservation area.

Portions of the redevelopment area along Hamilton Boulevard and New Market Avenue are proposed for retail/commercial development with the sole exception of the borough community police substation which will remain. On-site parking and other public access to this area, along with road and intersection improvements stretching the length of Hamilton Boulevard, will be provided. Part of Hamilton Boulevard will also be used for mini-storage.

The office/warehouse land use designation comprises the largest portion designated for development along and near Spicer and Garibaldi avenues and Fulton Street. Parking will also be provided in this area.

Semi-public with some parking and pedestrian access including a bridge to the Historic Downtown District, would be included adjacent to the Lehigh Valley Railroad. Buffer/conservation area will be included along Spicer with an environmentally sensitive area in lot 1, block 256 including a stream, flood plain and wetlands to be preserved.